

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2558

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONGEN HONG KONG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CGEN, TW, UK, HK

REF: A) STATE 169284; B) TAIPEI 4847

FOR TOKYO: PASS COCKERHAM: BRITISH EMBASSY, TOKYO

1. FOLLOWING EMBOFF REPRESENTATIONS OUTLINED IN REFTELS, MOFA DIRECTOR FOR CONSULAR AFFAIRS WANG MENG HSIEN RAISED AN UNRELATED MATTER FOR COMMENT BY HMG. WANG EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN WITH "BRITISH DISCRIMINATION" AGAINST BEARERS OF ROC PASSPORTS WHO WISH TO OBTAIN VISITOR'S PERMITS TO VISIT HONG KONG.

2. WANG STATED THAT HMG REQUIRES A) TWO YEARS RESIDENCE IN TAIWAN AND B) WITH A BOND OF \$HK 5,000 OR A SPONSOR RESIDENT IN HONG KONG FOR ISSUANCE OF A HK VISITOR'S PERMIT. HE ADDED THAT UNDER THESE REGULATIONS HE HIMSELF COULD NOT VISIT HONG KONG SINCE HE HAD RECENTLY RETURNED FROM AN OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENT. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ROC HAS RELAXED REQUIREMENTS FOR UK CITIZENS WISHING TO VISIT THE ROC. AT PRESENT, A UK CITIZEN NEED ONLY

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PRESENT HIS PASSPORT AT ANY ROC CONSULAR OFFICE AND A

TRANSIT VISIA VALID FOR A TWO WEEK STAY WILL BE ISSUED WITHOUT FURTHER FORMALITY.

3. WANG STRESSED THAT DELAY IN OBTAINING HK VISITOR'S PERMITS WAS CAUSING PARTICULAR HARDSHIP TO BUSINESSMEN WISHING TO REMAIN IN HONG KONG OVERNIGHT WHILE DIRECT TRANSIT TO OTHER DESTINATIONS. HE MENTIONED THAT TAIPEI-HONG KONG AIR SERVICE IS LIMITED WITH MANY FLIGHTS ARRIVING IN HONG KONG TOO LATE TO CATCH FLIGHTS DESTINED TO THE MID-EAST AND EUROPE, MOST OF WHICH HAVE EARLY MORNING DEPARTURES.

4. WANG REQUESTED EMBOFF TO TRANSMIT HIS CONCERN, PARTICULARLY THE PROBLEM OF ROC CITIZENS WISHING TO REMAIN IN HONG KONG FOR LESS THAN 24 HOURS IN DIRECT TRANSIT, TO HMG FOR COMMENT.

5. COMMENT: WANG'S STATEMENTS ARE TO A DEGREE DIS-INGENUOUS: THE GROC DRAWS A CAREFUL DISTINCTION BETWEEN UK AND HONG KONG PASSPORTS AND SUBJECTS CHINESE BEARING THE LATTER TO FAIRLY STRINGENT VISA REQUIREMENTS, NORMALLY INCLUDING A LOCAL GUARANTOR. NEVERTHELESS, UK AND HK OFFICIALS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THE ROC FEELS ITS PASSPORT HOLDERS DO NOT RECEIVE FULLY RECIPROCAL TREATMENT.
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